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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000863

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STATE FOR EUR/NCE, PM/RSAT, SCA/A

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2017

TAGS: EXIM NATO PARM PREL PTER AF EZ

SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC: FINAL APPROVAL ON AFGHANISTAN PRT  
EXPECTED IN AUGUST

REF: A. IIR 6 824 0245 07

1B. PRAGUE 683

1C. PRAGUE 648

1D. PRAGUE 067

1E. 06PRAGUE 225

Classified By: CDA Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Czech government approval to deploy a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to a U.S. base in Logar Province, Afghanistan is expected by mid-August 2007. The Czech-led PRT of approximately 130-150 personnel will begin arriving in Logar in January 2008 with a goal of being fully operational in March. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) is already identifying units to be deployed and issuing orders in advance of formal government approval. The Czechs are requesting to be integrated into the U.S. logistical support structure, and will not place any national caveats on the mission. A senior MoD contact said the Czechs would commit to the mission for several years. End summary.

12. (C) Senior Czech military officials told DAO representatives that deployment of a PRT to Logar Province is being taken "very seriously" by members of government (Ref A), and that this is considered a major foreign policy undertaking in 2008 which will increase the level of recognition for the Czech ISAF contribution. MFA reports that the government is planning to take up an MoD-MFA proposal establishing the PRT on August 22, its first session after the summer break. Parliamentary approval is also necessary, but no opposition has been heard.

13. (C) As further evidence of the likely PRT approval, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Development Assistance Department confirmed that they are in the process of reassigning foreign assistance funding to prioritize Afghanistan, although this process has not been completed. The government is considering allocating 150 million Czech crowns (approximately \$7.5 million) for the development portion of the PRT.

14. (C) Although the Czech PRT will be co-located on a U.S. forward operating base, composition of the PRT is expected to be exclusively Czech. The proposed PRT composition will be considerably larger than U.S. teams, and will include a ten-person civilian expert section, including representatives from Czech Ministries of Agriculture, Interior, Defense and Foreign Affairs and possibly a Czech NGO. The PRT would also contain an integrated medical team, civil affairs section and mine-resistant armored vehicles, a first for the province.

15. (C) COMMENT: Despite last year's reluctance to lead their own PRT (Ref D), MoD appears to have turned the corner. The

members of the inter-ministerial working group formed in December 2006 to develop the PRT proposal are considered to be the best minds in MoD and MFA and they have put together a solid, long term plan. Czechs government officials are now apparently competing to get assigned to the PRT; the military is aware that NATO ISAF has critical requirements in Afghanistan and they are eager to consolidate their ISAF operations and take charge of (and get credit for) their own mission. The Czechs and U.S. Department of Defense have been in direct contact and planning for the PRT is well-advanced.

End Comment.

DODMAN